

#E1-662
RG

February 20, 2004

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001



FD 34284

Dear Rini Ghosh,

We are writing in support of the proposed Vulcan Quarry for Medina County because it will help bring greater economic prosperity to the citizens of the area.

Currently, we live in San Antonio, but we have family in Medina County. Our home is near the Vulcan Quarry on Huebner Road and we have driven on the roads dissected by train tracks around the quarry for years. It has never been a traffic hazard, since the tracks are clearly marked. The train routes proposed for the Medina County quarry are in an undeveloped area of the county with far fewer people than in the San Antonio area. In fact, there are only a handful of residents in the ranch/farm-land area.

We understand the concerns about noise and health issues, but in San Antonio, the train travels within just a few yards from the high school my son attended, and never posed a problem. Traffic hazards and emissions will be less of an issue from a few trains per day than from the many more trucks it will take to haul the same amount of limestone. As far as harming or eradicating threatened or endangered species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concluded there are no risks to be concerned about with the creation of the Quarry or railroad.

The Vulcan Quarry will provide local employment for many people for many years and the schools, primarily Hondo I.S.D., will benefit from taxes paid by the Quarry. Hondo I.S.D. is not a property-rich district and as most small communities struggles to hire qualified teachers due to the inability to offer competitive salaries. The additional funding would help them attract more teachers.

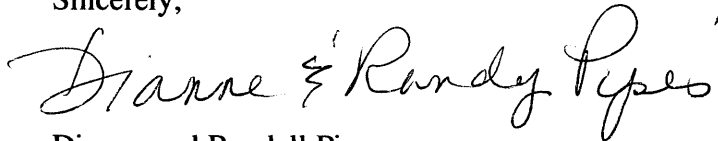
It is for the following reasons, that we support this project:

- Vulcan puts a great deal of emphasis on being a good community citizen.
- The quarry will bring more jobs to the county; so fewer residents would have to make long commutes to San Antonio and other distant locations.
- More jobs create economic prosperity and help improve our quality of life.
- Landowners and residents benefit when a corporation like Vulcan comes in and converts agricultural exempt land to commercial land.
- Vulcan does not plan to ask for a tax abatement and will eventually pay \$600,000 annually in taxes compared to the \$1,200 currently collected for the same land.

- The bulk of the tax dollars (\$450,000) will go to the Hondo Independent School District, reducing the need for costly school bonds.
- The remaining \$150,000 will go to the county to help minimize tax increases for citizens.
- Vulcan will pump approximately \$7 million into the local economy to pay for salaries, supplies, services and other operating expenses.
- The availability of commercial transportation makes the agricultural land in the county more marketable, thus increasing its value.
- Surrounding towns like Hondo, LaCoste, Devine, Natalia, Lytle and San Antonio have grade-level railroads running through them with no negative impact. With the exception of San Antonio, the other towns only have grade-level crossings.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dianne & Randy Pipes". The ink is black and the signature is fluid and connected.

Dianne and Randall Pipes

Docket No. 34284